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ABSTRACT

Briefly, in an informal and hand-printed format, the developmental stages of children's graphic representations, plus a few, selected art activities and appropriate art materials for young children are discussed in this illustrated guidebook for parents. Examples of children's drawings at the controlled and named scribbling stages, and at the schematic stage as well, illustrate a brief discussion of Lowenfeld's stages of artistic development. Other drawings illustrate the range of maturity levels exhibited by 5- and 6-year-old children who completed a Draw-a-Person Test. (Author/RH)

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Understanding Children's Art

Stages of Development Activities and Materials for young Children

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Understanding Children's Art

Stages of Development, Activities and Materials for Young Children

by

Linda Levy Henderson

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Resource Monograph #22

This public document was promulgated to disseminate information to public school personnel at an annual cost of $ 385.00 or a per copy cost of $ 0.77 .

Dear Parents and other teachers of young children,

This booklet is written to share with you the joy, and excitement of a young child's art.

To use this booklet you do not have to "know how to draw." For this is not an approach designed to "teach" art. Instead, it is based on the asking and answering of lots of questions and the providing of a place to work and simple materials.

Art is enjoyable. It is something we discover as young children and can experience throughout our lives.

I hope that this booklet will help you and your child discover many new and exciting ideas.

Linda Levy Henderson

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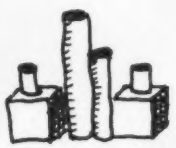
Jonathan Kindergarten Oct. 1974
"My Family"

What is Art?

The art experience for young children does, quite often, make use of crayons or paint and paper.
But it can also be the child's reaction to the sensory experiences of TOUCHING, FEELING, SEEING, TASTING, and LISTENING.

It is the experience of riding a bike through the sand and discovering the large patterns being formed.

It is building with
blocks and spools and tubes,

to create the many
shapes and forms, houses and boats, people and animals,
that make up a child's world.

It is costume design: dressing up in a cowboy hat, high heels, and a bright red evening dress.

It is making a shadow move, change shapes, disappear, and reappear.

It is the changing beat of a stick hitting the boards of a fence as a child walks down the street.

Art is sharing feelings and experiences.

Why is Art important?

"It may be that one of the basic abilities that should be taught in our public schools is the ability to discover and to search for answers instead of passively waiting for answers and directions from the teacher."
(Victor Lowenfeld p.4)

Art activities encourage this type of discovery.

Art allows children to create their own language using images or symbols, instead of words, to represent the people and places important in their lives.

No two children are alike.
Each child changes and grows as he experiences his environment.
Art grows and changes with each child.
The scribble becomes the shape.
The shape becomes the man.
The man becomes "Me and My Father, Fishing."

Art is a natural process.
It can not be hurried.
But it can grow and mature when a caring adult shows interest, asks questions, provides experiences and materials.

Stages of Artistic Development

Children progress through stages of development in art which parallel their growth in other areas.

Victor Lowenfeld, in his book, Creative and Mental Growth, defines some characteristics of children and their art at each level of development.

The first 3 stages are:

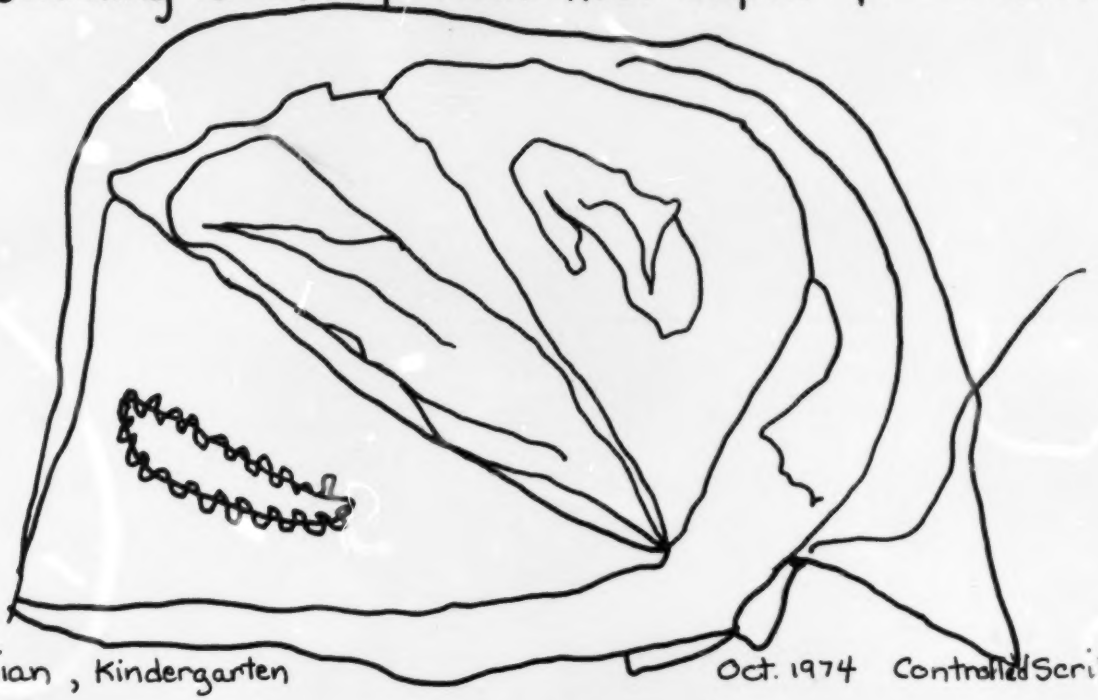
Stage 1 Beginning of Self Expression
- The scribbling stage
  - disordered scribbles
  - controlled scribbles
  - named scribbles

Stage 2 First attempts at representation
- preschematic stage

Stage 3 Development of concepts
- schematic stage

The following section gives a brief description of each of the first 3 stages of development.

Scribbling is a very important first step in the development of drawing and writing skills, just as babbling is an important first step in speech development.



Brian, Kindergarten Oct. 1974 Controlled Scribble

At the controlled scribbling stage:

The child will begin to discover that there are connections between the motions of his crayon and the marks on his paper.

The scribbles created do not have names and are not intended to be "pictures".

The child at this stage is not ready to do things which require fine motor control.
He is going to be a sloppy eater.
He is going to have trouble with buttons.

At the named scribble stage:

The child has made a connection between the motions of scribbling and the names of familiar objects.

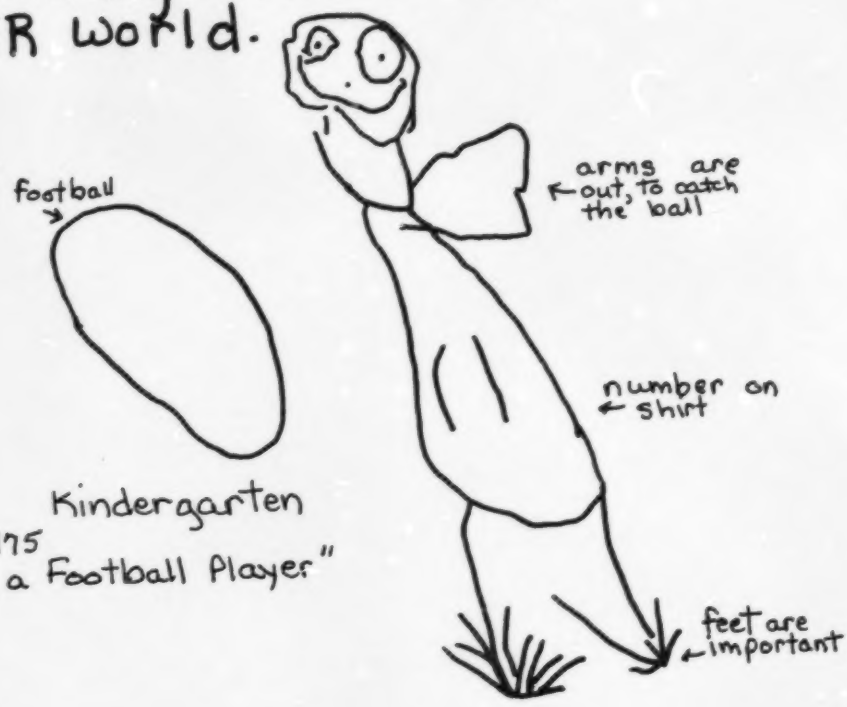
Brian, Kindergarten May 1975 "I Live in a Mobile Home"

The child begins to show interest in using colors to represent different objects.

The colors do not copy reality. The child's scribble named "Tree" may be colored green, but it may just as likely be colored orange or purple.

First attempts at representation:

Children begin making forms which relate to THEIR world.



Brian Kindergarten
June 1975
"I am a Football Player"

These forms are in an early experimental stage; they change from day to day.

The child is not trying to draw what he sees, but rather what he knows.

He knows that his head is important- it is where eating and talking take place, seeing, hearing, and smelling take place. The arms and legs are important for movement- running, jumping, swinging from a branch, catching a ball.

At the Schematic Stage:

The schema* is a symbol or image which the child developes after much experimenting. He repeats this image again and again until an experience influences him to change.

Jonathan Kindergarten June 1975

"My Father and I Are Walking the Dog"

The child begins to arrange objects in a more realistic way.
Objects are lined up on the ground or base line, and a skyline often appears at the top of the page.

The child discovers a relationship between color and object.
"The sky is blue." "The grass is green."
There is not discrimination between a sunny sky and a stormy sky.

*Note the schema used for the people in the above drawing. There are only minor differences between them, but one is the father; one is the child. Also note the base line and sky line.

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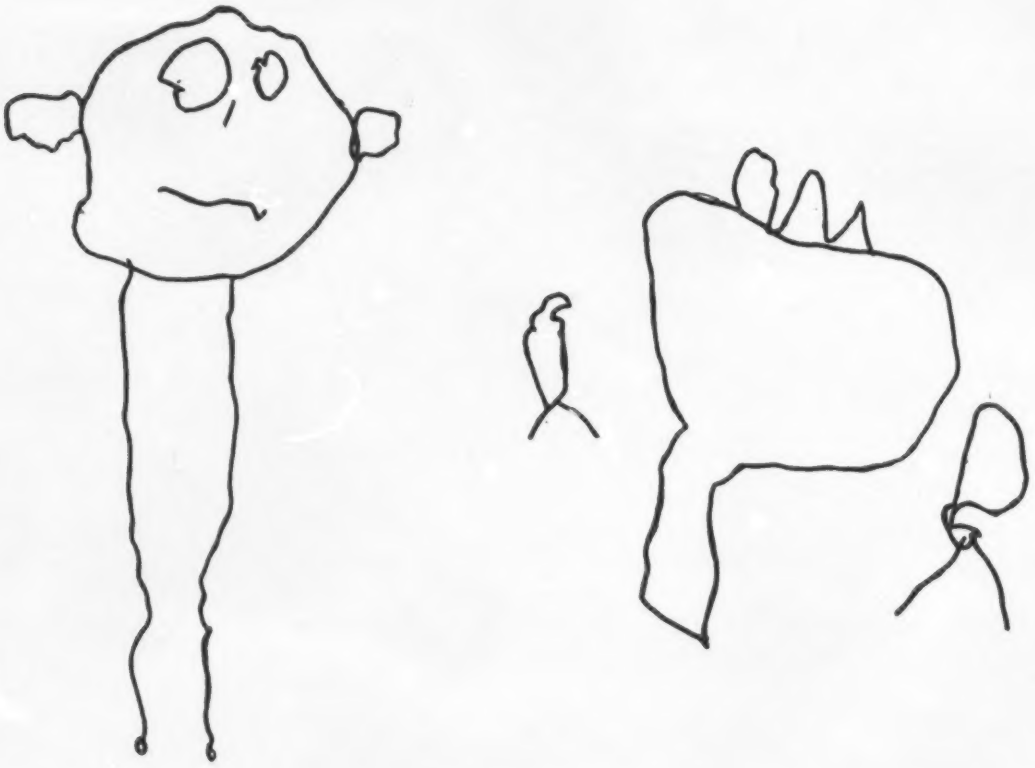
Draw-a-Person Test:
an indication of developmental stages or maturity levels.

The drawings which follow serve as an example of the range of maturity levels exhibited by 5- and 6-year-old children.

The 85 kindergarten and first grade children were participants in a P.K. Yonge research study conducted by Linda Levy Henderson during the 1974-1975 school year.

The children at P.K. Yonge and Duval Elementary were asked to "Draw-a-person" in October and again in May. The drawings were scored by 5 trained raters.

Maturity Level Drawings



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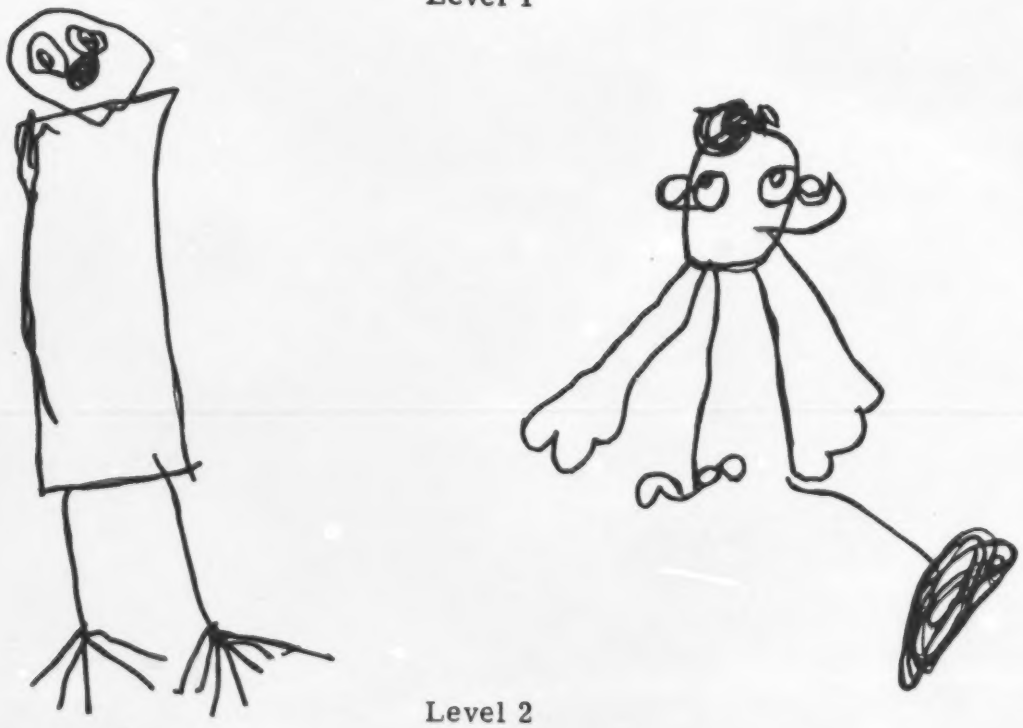

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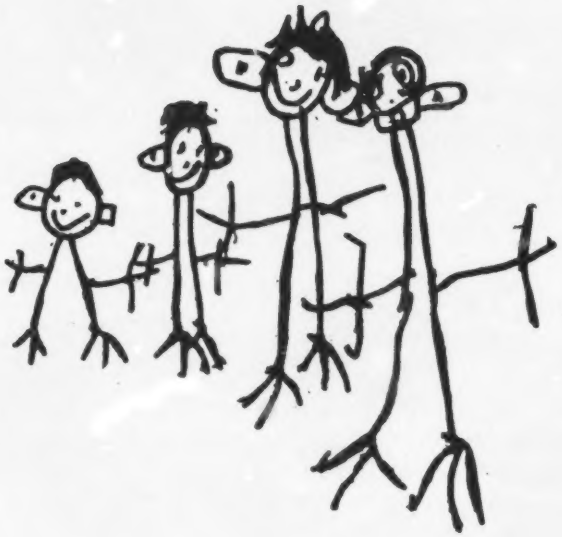

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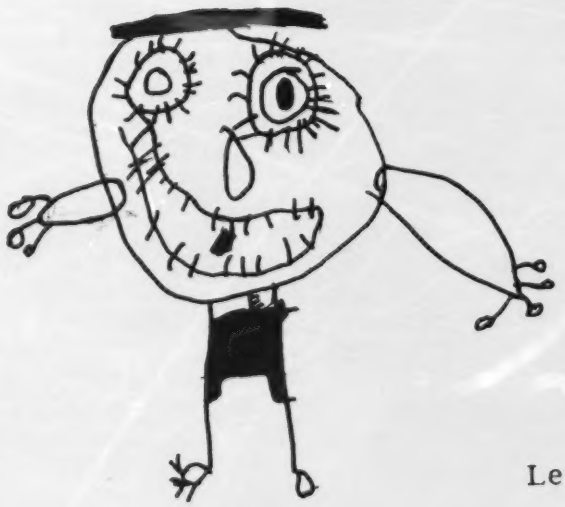

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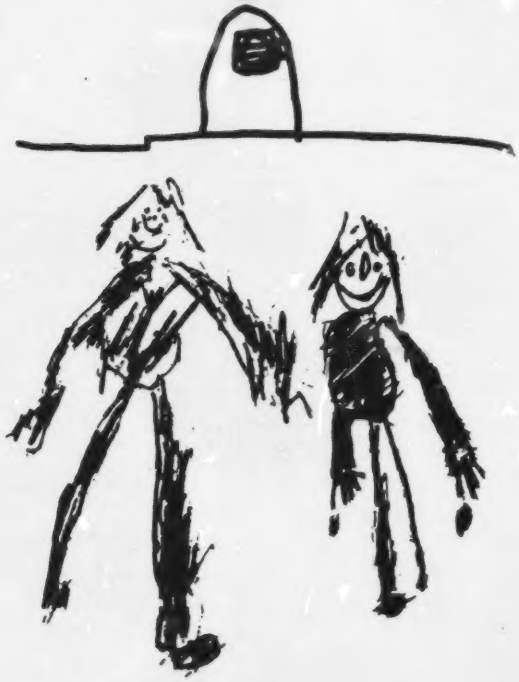

Level 9

Level 10

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Level 11

Level 12

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What about coloring books?

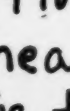
What do the experts say?

Victor Lowenfeld, in his book Creative and Mental Growth states:
"The dependency upon someone else's outline of an object makes the child much less confident in his own means of expression. He obviously cannot draw a cow as well as the one in the coloring book."

Rhoda Kellogg, in her book Analyzing Children's Art states:
"These books help to fix in the child's mind certain adult-devised formulas for representing objects."

What does all this mean?

Coloring books provide children with pictures that adults have drawn; pictures that adults think children will like. But, these pictures have no relationship to the way a young child represents his world through drawing.

A five year old who is drawing a typical "head-feet"  person, will never see this type of person in a coloring book. He may begin to feel that his type of person is "wrong" and the coloring book person is "right."

Coloring books give children little need for problem solving, creative thinking, or decision making. Everything has already been planned out.

Don't coloring books teach children control by having them stay within the lines?

As children move from scribbling to representational drawing, it is most natural for them to draw the outlines of the objects they wish to represent. When a child develops a need to color the objects in his drawing, he does so with care and purpose. He does not need to be taught this process through coloring books or color-in dittos.

Materials and Activities

Materials:

The art materials listed in this section are appropriate for children in the 3 stages of development.

Activities:

The activities are designed for children who have developed beyond the scribbling stage.

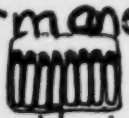
Children who are in the scribbling stage benefit most from activities which encourage materials exploration and simple problem solving. They should not be asked to create art work that is beyond their level of development.

Drawing Materials

12"x18" Newsprint
12"x18" Manilla (great for chalk and paint)
Free paper:
newsprint from newspaper company
computer paper
scraps from printing company

Crayons: Jumbo crayons do not break as easily, regular size crayons good for detail. Children enjoy using both sizes.

Markers: Non-permanent (come 8 or 10 in package)



Chalk: Dry colored chalk is great on the side walk, encourages large drawings. On paper, need spray-fix or hair-spray.
Wet Chalk (1 part sugar/3 parts water) soak chalk in solution, drain, save solution.
Wet chalk goes on paper smoothly, does not smear easily when dry.

Oil Pastels: good for children in the schematic stage. Bright colors.
Colored Pencils: good for children in the schematic stage who enjoy drawing with much detail.

Drawing Activities

Through experience, children gain skills in using tools and materials. By asking questions which are designed to help the child focus on the characteristics of each new material, his experience will be more meaningful.

Sample questions for exploring drawing materials:

Crayons: What kinds of lines can crayons make? Are the lines fatter when you use the point or the side? Does the color change when you use yellow over red?

Markers: Are markers better for lines or for filling in spaces? Do markers work better on smooth or bumpy paper? What happens when you leave the tip of the marker on the paper for a long time?

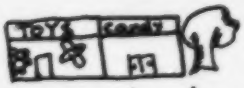
Chalk: Does the wet chalk go on the paper smoothly? Is it good for filling in big spaces? How can you make new colors?

Drawing Topics

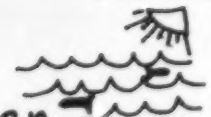
Children are often more excited about drawing after they have had a vivid experience. Special events, as well as everyday happenings, can stimulate ideas.

By asking questions and encouraging the child to think about his experiences, his drawings will take on new meaning.

While on an outing point out interesting things. Ask lots of: How does....?
What would happen if.....?
What do you think about....?

Example: 

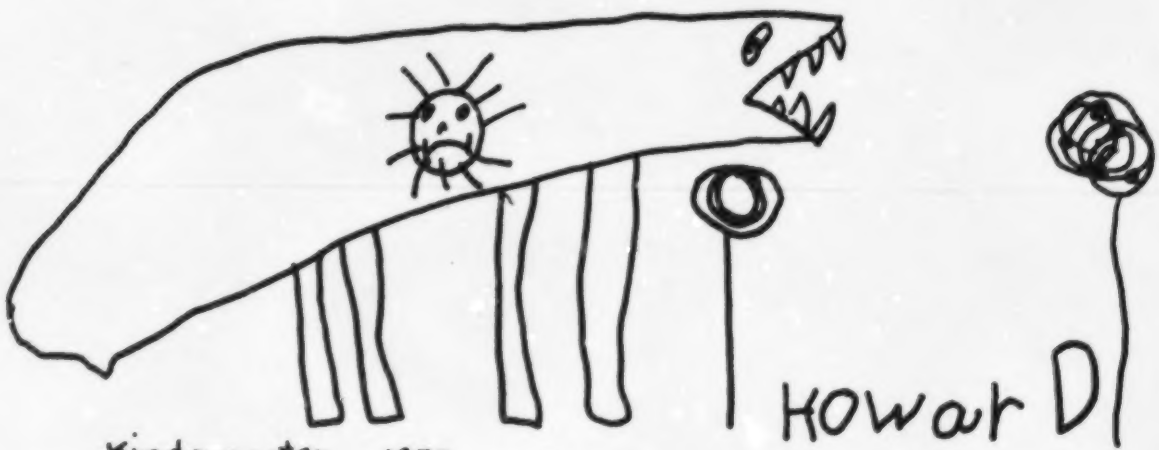
After going to the toy store to pick out a gift for a friend: What was the best toy there? The biggest? The funniest? How do they fit all of those things into one store? Do they stack them up? Are there other stores that are more fun than a toy store?

During and after a trip to the beach: 
Is the water cold? How does it feel when the waves go over your head? .... when your feet sink into the sand? .... when the sun is shining on your back? Our trip was so much fun. Could you draw about it?

Imaginary topics are often fun and can stimulate creative thinking. Here are a few for "starters":

"What animal would you be if you could be one?"
"What would it be like to live under water?"
"....in outer space?" ".... on the moon?"
"Would you rather be a giant or a tiny person?"
"Imaginary animals."
"Imaginary places."
"A machine that makes anything you want."
"The King and Queen's castle."

"The Day the Dinosaur ~~Ate~~ the Sun"



Kindergarten 1975

Painting

Paintless Painting

Young children enjoy painting outside on a wall with a bucket of water and a large brush.

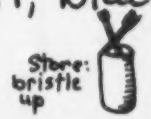
Tempera Paint: liquid is best. It can be bought in liquid form, but it is fairly expensive.

Dry tempera: comes in 1 pound plastic cans, mixes easily with water. If a small amount of soap powder is added, paint will clean up easier.

To mix dry tempera:

1. start with 1 cup of water in a bowl
2. add tempera slowly, stir, paint will be very thick when whole can has been added.
3. add more water, a little at a time - paint should look like <u>thick</u> cream.
4. pour back into plastic container, shake, store until needed.

Brushes: 1" and ½" stiff, black bristle easel brushes.



Water colors: not appropriate for young children. They have difficulty getting paint to a good consistency; it runs and flows too much.

Mixing Colors

Red, yellow, and blue are primary colors. They cannot be made by mixing other colors together so they are necessary to have.

Children discover and can repeat, the color combinations necessary to make green, orange, and violet (see color wheel). The combination of colors needed to make brown is easily discovered but difficult to repeat.

To make brown: make green and add red a drop at a time until the mixture turns brown.

White paint teaches the concept of light/dark. If a child starts with white, he can discover an entire range of shades by adding very small amounts of any color.

Recycled pie pans or TV dinner pans are great paint mixing trays.

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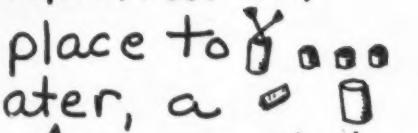
Painting Activities

Painting usually needs little motivation other than a comfortable place to work and paint, brushes, water, a sponge, and manilla paper. An old shirt, buttoned up the back, is a great help!



By asking questions before, during, and after painting, a child is able to clearly focus his thinking on the painting process. Question like:

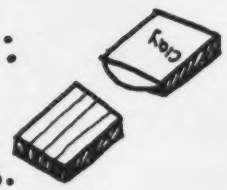
What would happen if 2 colors ran together?
..... if you mixed a color with white?
.... if you made a line with a fat brush?
.... if you used a thin brush?
How did you make this beautiful new color?
..... that wiggly line?
..... such a light green?

Even if a child is drawing people and houses, his early paintings are likely to be in the scribbling stage. This is quite natural as paint takes considerable control. The act of painting is quite manipulative and lends itself to experimentation.

The best paint topics are those which do not require much detail, but instead encourage feelings. "The Colors of a Circus", "A Fall Day", "The Beach", "A Wavey Ocean", "A Rainy Day", "Happy Colors".

Clay

Oil Base Clay - Modeling Clay:
will not harden; the more it is worked, the softer it gets. It is good clay for children who like to work small.



Pottery Clay:
It will shrink and harden when air-dried, but it is not permenent until fired in a kiln. To keep this type of clay so that it can be reused:

1. after using, return to ball shape.
2. press thumb to form indentation in center.
3. fill indentation with water.
4. store in plastic bag.
5. secure bag.

Clay Substitutes:
can be made at home using inexpensive ingredients. It works best for simple items that do not require much detail.

The following are 2 recipes from Early Childhood Art, by Barbara Herberholz:

Salt Ceramic

1 Cup Salt
½ Cup cornstarch
¾ Cup water
stir ingredients in a pan, then cook over a medium heat, stirring constantly with a wooden spoon until it thickens into a big blob. Remove from heat and place mixture on a piece of foil. When it cools a bit, mix thoroughly. If it must be kept a short while before using, Knead again.

Baker's Dough

1 Cup salt
4 Cups flour
1½ Cups water (add liquid tempera for color)
Mix ingredients thoroughly with hands, adding a little more water if necessary. Knead about 5 minutes until it is soft and pliable. Bake on foil-covered baking sheets in a 350° oven until nicely browned and hard all the way through. Thick pieces will require a longer time than flat pieces. Colored dough may be left to dry with no baking.

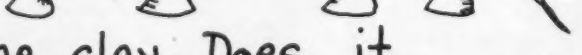
Clay Activities

By experimenting with clay before objects are made, children discover many exciting possibilities.

Start out with a ball of clay that fits comfortably in the child's hand.
Clay tools are found objects: forks, spoons, popsicle sticks.
For texturing: shells, spools, small wood blocks, small sticks, pinecones, anything that makes a mark or indentation.

Clay experimentation questions:
How does the clay feel? warm/cold, smooth/rough
Can you make your clay ball flat?
How many different kinds of marks can you make with your fingers? With a shell? With a stick? With a fork?
What other kinds of objects would make interesting shapes or marks when you gently press them into the clay?

Warm-up activities:
Make different shapes, ball ○ cube □ cone △.
See how tall you can make the cone before it falls down.



Press your hand into the clay. Does it leave an impression?

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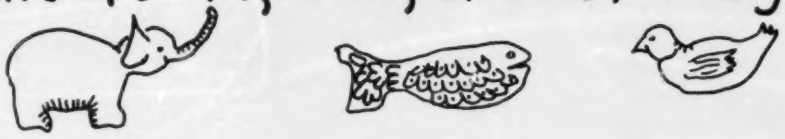
Things to make:

Beads

Finger Puppets

Animals: farm, zoo, circus, imaginary 

People for a play house

Faces or masks

Simple Pots

Children have endless ideas for clay!

Found Materials

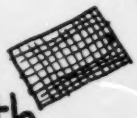
Colored paper (small pieces)
Cloth, different textured (small pieces)
Yarn scraps
String
Sand paper scraps
Cotton balls
Paper bags, lunch and grocery size
Paper plates
Paper towel tubes
Fruit and vegetable containers
Small boxes
Wood Scraps
Wall paper scraps
anything else that has an interesting shape, color, texture, or possible use.

Scissors
Glue
Masking tape
Newsprint or manilla paper

Activities for "Found" Materials

Glue items with a variety of textures on 3"x 5" cards, 2 cards for each texture
Some possibilities are:

sandpaper	smooth cloth	cotton
wax paper	bark	steel wool
rough cloth	leaves	burlap



Use the cards for matching games; try playing with open eyes, then closed eyes.
Categorize the cards as to color, textures, uses, etc.
Talk about the differences and similarities of the "feel" of the surfaces.

Make a Feeling box, leave a hole for hands.

Put interesting found objects in the box.
Have the child feel, then guess what it is.

When using found materials for art activities, introduce the materials in a sequence that builds skills and understanding.
Skills: tearing, using glue. Use 4"x6" pieces of colored construction paper. Have the child tear paper to form shapes, then glue shapes on a larger piece of paper.

Skills: cutting, using glue. Have child cut shape out of 4"x6" construction paper. Continue as before.

Children can do the above 2 activities with a variety of colors, sizes of paper, with or without drawing with crayons; the possibilities are endless.

After cutting, tearing, and use of glue is no longer difficult, add new materials:
yarn scraps, cloth scraps, string

After the child has experienced, and can work with a variety of materials, the following activities will be more meaningful.

Paper bag puppets (use lunch bags):

Problem solve - What would make good hair, clothing, eyes, a nose?
How do we add arms, legs or ears?
Make 2 puppets, have a puppet show.

Paper bag masks (use grocery size bags):
Slip bag over child's head, mark eyes.
Help child cut out eyes.
Using a variety of materials encourage the child to make a-
funny or scarey mask
an "unknown creature" mask
a "favorite character" mask

Paper plate mask or puppet:
follow procedures for paper bag masks or puppets.

Sculpture:
After you have a good supply of tubes, oj cans, fruit and vegetable containers, small boxes, and cardboard, the possibilities for sculpture are endless.
With little motivation other than, "What can we do with all these things?"; most children will build, create, and play with these materials for a long period of time.
When it comes time to have the houses, boats, trucks, etc. hold together - masking tape and glue work well.

Wood sculpture:
Save, find, or cut small pieces of wood. Have child play with the pieces for a while before giving him glue to hold the sculpture together.

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